

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 ABIDJA 00238 01 OF 02 101002Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02
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R 100830Z JAN 78
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TO AMEMBASSY PARIS
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 6857
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 ABIDJAN 0238

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDEV, OVIP, IV, FR
SUBJECT: INTERVIEW OF PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING

1. IN PREPARATION FOR GISCARD'S VISIT, IVORIAN MEDIA HAVE BEEN SATURATING IVORY COAST WITH NEWS, ARTICLES, REVIEWS AND RADIO/TV PROGRAMS ON FRANCE AND FRENCH-IVORIAN RELATIONS. TWO DAYS PRIOR TO GISCARD'S ARRIVAL, "FRATERNITE MATIN" HAS PUBLISHED AN "EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW" WITH THE FRENCH PRESIDENT. SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS FOLLOW:

2. GISCARD BEGAN INTERVIEW STATING THAT, WHILE THERE IS CONFLICT IN MANY PARTS OF AFRICA, IVORY COAST UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY IS AT PEACE, STABLE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. HIS VISIT OF FIVE UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 ABIDJA 00238 01 OF 02 101002Z

DAYS, "ONE OF THE LONGEST EVER TAKEN BY A FRENCH PRESIDENT ABROAD," WILL GIVE HIM THE OPPORTUNITY TO REALLY SEE IVORY COAST.

3. FRENCH-IVORIAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION: GISCARD STATED THAT IVORY COAST WAS PRINCIPAL RECIPIENT OF GOVT ASSISTANCE; BUT THAT IVORY COAST IS A COUNTRY WHICH RELIES MOST ON

ITSELF. AS AN EXAMPLE OF EXTENT OF FRENCH ASSISTANCE,
GISCARD STATED ONE-THIRD OF FRENCH COOPERANTS OF MINISTRY
OF COOPERATION SERVE IN IVORY COAST.

4. GISCARD'S PROPOSAL FOR AN EUROPEAN-AFRICAN SOLIDARITY
PACT:

ASKED TO EXPAND ON HIS PROPOSAL OF LAST JUNE AND
TO REPORT ON ITS STATUS, GISCARD REPLIED IT WAS BASED
ON TWO CONSIDERATIONS: THE NEED TO CREATE A NEW WEB
OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS OF INDEPENDENT AND
SOVEREIGN STATES AS THE ERA OF DECOLONIZATION NEARS ITS
END; AND THE EXISTENCE OF A COMMUNITY OF CLOSE AND NATURAL
INTERESTS BETWEEN EUROPE AND AFRICA. IT WAS A LONG-TERM
PROJECT AND NOT MEANT TO CHALLENGE THE REGIONAL GROUPINGS
ALREADY IN EXISTENCE. AS TO THE STATUS OF HIS PROPOSAL,
GISCARD SAID THE REACTIONS OF AFRICAN LEADERS HAVE BEEN
POSITIVE, AND THAT THE EUROPEAN REACTIONS "HAD NOT BEEN
NEGATIVE." THE PROPOSAL IS BEING STUDIED WITH INTEREST
AMONG CERTAIN OF FRANCE'S PARTNERS.

5. AN AFRICA FOR AFRICANS: ASKED WHAT FRANCE INTENDS
TO DO FOR THE SECURITY OF AFRICA, GISCARD REPLIED THAT,
PRECISELY BECAUSE AFRICA MUST BE FOR AFRICANS IN ORDER
TO BE ABLE TO DEVOTE ITS RESOURCES TO DEVELOPMENT, "FRANCE
HAD BEEN LED TO AFFIRM THE PRINCIPLE ACCORDING TO WHICH
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PAGE 03 ABIDJA 00238 01 OF 02 101002Z

ALL AFRICAN STATES HAVE THE RIGHT TO SECURITY WITHIN
THEIR FRONTIERS." THUS, THE LOGISTICAL ASSISTANCE
FRANCE GAVE ZAIRE DURING THE SHABA AFFAIR AND THE
PRESENCE OF FRENCH FORCES IN DJIBOUTI AT THE REQUEST OF
THE DJIBOUTIANS. FRANCE ALSO PROVIDES TECHNICAL MILITARY
ASSISTANCE TO A NUMBER OF AFRICAN STATES THAT HAVE RE-
QUESTED IT. FINALLY, FRANCE HAS DEFENSE AGREEMENTS WITH
A CERTAIN NUMBER OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES WITH WHICH SHE HAS
CLOSE TIES, PARTICULARLY THE IVORY COAST. FRANCE WILL
ABIDE BY HER COMMITMENTS.

IN RESPONSE TO A RELATED QUESTION ON SOVIET AFRICAN
POLICY, GISCARD STATED THAT FOR AFRICANS TO PURSUE
THEIR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, THEY MUST BE FREE
TO CHOOSE THEIR MEANS WITHOUT BECOMING AN OBJECT OF
FOREIGN IDEOLOGICAL CONFLICTS. MOREOVER, FRANCE VIEWS
WITH GROWING CONCERN THE NUMBER OF CONFLICTS THAT HAVE
OCCURRED IN RECENT MONTHS WHICH HAVE OFTEN BEEN AGGRAVATED
BY EXTERNAL INTERFERENCE.

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PAGE 01 ABIDJA 00238 02 OF 02 100951Z

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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 ABIDJAN 0238

6. NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE: Giscard stated that the CIEC which completed its work six months ago has marked a fundamental stage because it has reinforced the spirit of cooperation between the industrialized countries and the developing countries. Some not unimportant results were achieved of which Africa is perhaps the chief beneficiary in the area of resource transfers, infrastructure and raw materials. For future discussions to be successful, it is necessary that the entire international community show imagination and realism.

7. SOUTH AFRICA: Giscard stated France provides no assistance whatsoever to South Africa. She maintains state to state relations with Pretoria, as she does with other states with whose political philosophy she does not agree. FRANCE
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PAGE 02 ABIDJA 00238 02 OF 02 100951Z

VOTED FOR THE UNSC RESOLUTION LAST NOVEMBER THAT FORBIDS THE SALE OF ANY MILITARY MATERIAL TO SOUTH AFRICA;

THUS, SHE EVEN CANCELLED THE DLIVERY OF FOUR NAVAL VESSELS THAT HAD BEEN ALREADY PURCHASED BY PRETORIA.

8. FINALLY, AS REGARDS THE COMORO ISLANDS, GISCARD WAS ASKED IF FRANCE WOULD MODIFY HER POSITION AS IS DESIRED BY A MAJORITY OF AFRICAN STATES. GISCARD REPLIED THE FUTURE OF THE MAHORAIS IS NOT IN THE HANDS OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS AND CAN ONLY BE DETERMINED BY THE MAHORAIS THEMSELVES. FRANCE HAS DONE ITS PART TO ASSURE THE MAHORAIS HAVE THE FREEDOM TO CHOOSE. THEY HAVE FREELY CHOSEN TWICE, AND IF IN THE FUTURE THE MAHORAIS SHOULD CHOOSE A RAPPROCHMENT WITH THE REST OF THE ARCHIPELAGO, FRANCE WOULD NOT OPPOSE IT.

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